

THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF BLANDFORD TOWNSHIP,
OXFORD COUNTY, ONTARIO

III

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BULLETIN No. 1

XVII.—*The Archaeology of Blandford Township, Oxford County, Ontario.*

By W. J. WINTERBERG.

LOCATION AND AREA.

Blandford township, Oxford county, Ontario, lies in the fertile farming country—about midway between Lakes Huron, Erie, and Ontario—in the cleared forest region, the St. Lawrence lowlands, and within the western part of the Iroquoian linguistic area, this region being occupied by the Neutral Indians, the westernmost tribe of the Iroquoian stock, when the early French missionaries arrived.

This township is bordered on the north by Wilmot township, Waterloo county; and on the east, south, and west by Blenheim, East Oxford, and East Zorra townships respectively, all of Oxford county. It is $12\frac{1}{2}$ miles from north to south, and its greatest width is 8 miles.

PHYSICAL FEATURES.

The topographical features are somewhat regular throughout the township, but a few high hills are encountered in the eastern lots of concession X. In the central portion of the township there is considerable light, sandy soil, and much of the land, especially that surrounding some of the lakes, is low and marshy. The land contiguous to Lockhart lake is of a hilly character, mainly composed of what is known locally as "blow" sand with

very little humus. Here the principal timber was pine and other conifers. The country in the northern part of the township and between concessions I and III was once largely covered with deciduous trees.

Geologically the rock formation of this district belongs to the Corniferous period. Outcrops of limestone occur in the bed of the river Thames opposite Innerkip. However, very little of this limestone was utilized by the aboriginal inhabitants of the district, who used waterworn fragments occurring in the drift or local gravel beds.

The river Thames, bordered by high banks in several places, forms more than three-fourths of the western boundary of the township. Horner creek, having its source in East Zorra to the west, enters the township between concessions XI and XII. Numerous smaller streams traverse other parts. In the central portion there are several small lakes. One or two small dry lake beds occur in the eastern part of the township, and these no doubt were open lakes at no very remote period. Long, low-lying stretches of land between all the lakes and dry beds indicate that these were formerly connected by streams. Hagey lake is the only one surrounded, or partly surrounded by high banks.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.

Having studied the archaeology of this township and partly completed a survey and map of the archaeological features of the surface in continuance of the survey of Blenheim township which I made for the Provincial Museum in 1902,¹ and of my studies of other neighbouring townships, I was enabled to complete this surface survey by locating twenty-three habitation sites, four burial sites, and many surface finds in the autumn of 1912, as archaeological field-worker of the Canadian Geological Survey. I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness especially to Messrs. John, Frederick, and Edwin Mitchell, James E. Hewitt, George A. Smith, and James Skillings.

¹Wintemberg, W. J., "Archaeology of Blenheim Township," Ontario Archaeological Report for 1902, pp. 58-70.

LODGE OR HOUSE SITES.

The sites of prehistoric houses or lodges in this township are indicated by circular spots on the fields, made up of blackened soil. These spots are from about 10 to 20 feet, or more, in diameter. The usual fire-burnt and broken stones and blackened soil due to decayed organic matter, mixed with burned material, are always present in the sites. No artifacts are found in the lodge sites, but they are found in the unblackened soil surrounding them. The fire-burnt and cracked stones no doubt mark the floor of a fire-place. In lodge site No. 11 and several others no stones were found in the surrounding sandy soil; hence those found in the site must have been brought from a distance. On some sites these black spots have become almost entirely obliterated by being covered with drifting sand since the ground has been cleared, but the plough occasionally turns up the fire-burnt stones. They are all pre-Neutral.

These sites are scattered throughout the habitable territory, particularly in favoured positions on the shores of lakes and streams; and not only in localities where pine was the principal timber, but also where the trees were entirely deciduous, while the Neutral village sites, found in adjoining townships, are only in the pine lands. Usually there is only one spot at a place. A spot may be the remains of camp fires of a single lodge, or it may be a communal fire-place, the lodges having been grouped around it. Many of them appear to have been occupied for a long time, judging by the amount of discoloured soil.

No. 1. There are two lodge sites on the farm of John Schlemmer, lot 9, concession XIV. Here the late H. Z. Smith, of New Hamburg, found a number of chipped arrowheads.

No. 2. There is a lodge site on a low bank near a stream on the Klinkman farm, north half of lot 4, concession XIV. Here points chipped out of stone for arrows have been found.

No. 3. There are two lodge sites on the farm of Thomas Scott, lot 1, concession XIV. Here chipped stone points for arrows were the only artifacts discovered. A banner-stone was found on the Bell farm, on the south half of the same lot.

No. 4. There is a large lodge site on the bank of what was formerly a rivulet in one of Robert Woods' fields, lot 1,

concession XIII, according to Mr. Woods. Here he has not found artifacts, probably because he is a recent tenant.

No. 5. There is a lodge site on the east bank of an affluent of Horner creek, on the farm of Robert Pettigrew, lot 4, concession XII. Here chipped stone points for arrows have been collected.

No. 6. There are three lodge sites on the bank of Horner creek on the farm of James Davidson, lot 10, concession XI. Here points for arrows chipped out of stone, and celts have been found.

No. 7. There are seven lodge sites on the north half of lot 4, concession X, and one in an adjoining field on lot 3. These are on the high bank of Horner creek. Here no artifacts have been found, although on the next farm to the east, chipped stone points for arrows, a gorget, and other artifacts have been secured. About 1901 a cache was found here containing thirty-seven chipped chert leaf-shaped forms with straight bases. None of these are over $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches long. This cache is now in the Wintemberg collection catalogued under numbers 24331-24362 in the Provincial Museum, Toronto.

No. 8. There is a lodge site on the east bank of the river Thames, on the old Milburn farm, lot 11, concession X. From here no artifacts have been reported.

No. 9. There is a small lodge site near Horner creek, on lot 2, concession IX. This is only a few feet in diameter and was found by a son of Luke Gilholm while he was ploughing a new piece of land. Here the usual fire-burnt and cracked stones were seen. On the same farm chipped stone points for arrows and celts were found.

No. 10. There is a lodge site on the bank of the River Thames, on the farm of Joseph Gillespie, lot 9, concession IX. In the neighbourhood a few artifacts have been discovered. On the farm of James Nicol in the township of East Zorra, just south of this camp site, Mr. Nicol found chipped stone points for arrows, and an object like a thick gorget with two perforations which somewhat resembles a boat-shaped stone, but lacks the concavity of most of them and has a nipple on the convex side.

No. 11. There is a lodge site about one hundred rods west of Horner creek on the farm of John Cudmore, lot 4, concession VIII. From here no artifacts have been reported.

No. 12. There is a lodge site near Horner creek, on lot 2, concession VIII, according to John Mitchell, who lives on lot 3, concession VII. Here he found a bar amulet made of striped slate. It is 7 inches long, $\frac{1}{2}$ inch high, and $\frac{1}{4}$ inch wide. This specimen, which is now in the collection of D. A. Woods, of Toronto, is represented in the Victoria Memorial Museum by cast No. VI-F-8307.

No. 13. There are several lodge sites on the farm of Frederick Mitchell, north half of lot 4, concession VII, as indicated by numerous fire-burnt stones and fragment of pottery. Here, a crude pottery pipe of a certain type was found. The bowl is about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches in diameter by 1 inch high; the stem is broken. It is now, catalog number VIII-F-8303, in the Victoria Memorial Museum.

No. 14. There is a very large lodge site on the Isbister farm, on the northwest quarter of lot 7, concession VI. Here James Hewitt of Innerkip has found points chipped from stone for arrows, also celts, and pendants. Here a Mr. Bowman found a bowl broken from a pottery pipe, originally nearly the same form as the one from site No. 13. This has been burnt to a deep black colour, and is decorated with incised lines. It is now in the J. Hewitt Collection at Innerkip.

No. 15. There is a lodge site on the farm of Edward Lock, lot 7, concession VI. From here no artifacts have been reported.

No. 16. There is a lodge site on the farm of Edmund Skillings, lot 7, concession VI, just east of site No. 15. Here were found many points chipped from chert for arrows, spears, and knives, several chipped stone points for drills, also celts, gorgets, four broken banner stones of the "butterfly" type, and a fragment of pottery. The fragment of pottery is unlike any found on near-by sites in having a cornice-like rim. It bears oblique incised lines. In both texture and decoration it is like pottery found on Neutral sites.

No. 17. There are five or six lodge sites along the bank of the river Thames on the McFarlane farm, lot 8, concession V. Here Mr. Hewitt has found chipped stone points for arrows,

fragments of pottery, and other artifacts. On the farm of Daniel Brown, on the north half of this lot, about 1901, a pot, over 8 inches in diameter at the scalloped top and nearly 14 inches deep, was found under the roots of a pine stump. The decoration is confined to the rim and neck of the vessel. There are short oblique incised lines around the top, then a row of pits punched into the clay, next several marks encircling the neck, followed by a row of short vertical strokes and three encircling lines. Below these there is a chevron design bounded by another line which encircles the pot near its equator. The remaining surface is smooth except where traces of paddle marks remain. The specimen is now in the collection of F. Crocker of Stratford, Ontario.

No. 18. There is a lodge site on the farm of Samuel Trachsel, lot 4, concession V. Near this some artifacts have been discovered; a pottery pipe similar to the one found on site No. 13 is said to have been among them.

No. 19. There is a small lodge site on a newly broken piece of ground near the west shore of Cranberry lake, on the Joseph Chesney farm, lot 3, concession V.

No. 20. There are several lodge sites on the bank of a small stream, a few hundred rods east of Little Buck lake, on the farm of William Moyer, north half of lot 2, concession V. They are now indicated only by fire-burnt and broken stones, although when the land was ploughed several dark spots were plainly seen. Here J. Hewitt has found numerous chipped points for arrows, also fragments of pottery, drills, a small hammer stone, a heavy unsymmetrical grooved axe, and a slate pendant $5\frac{1}{4}$ inches long, by $2\frac{1}{2}$ wide, with only one perforation and a number of notches on the lower edge. The hammer stone is made of granite, and appears to have been an angular fragment battered until it became nearly oval, save for a flat part of the original surface of the stone, which remains on one side. It still shows peck marks on its entire periphery. I found a chipping-block, or stithy, that is a stone with a deep hole in one side, and a number of fragments of pottery. Some of the potsher¹² found here are smooth; others are decorated with simple circular depressions arranged in a geometric pattern near the rim; and still others with equidistant parallel lines which may have encir-

aled and covered the entire surface of the pot. A circular impression, possibly made with a hollow reed, forms the decoration on another fragment. Here Mr. Moyer found what appears to be an unfinished "woman's knife." This has been roughly chipped out of dark coloured slate, and is unusually large, being 12 inches long, $4\frac{1}{2}$ wide, and about $\frac{3}{4}$ inch thick. It seems to be too thin to be a winged banner stone in process of manufacture. Here, also, was found a lizard-shaped amulet made of black slate. It is a little more than 4 inches long, 1 inch wide, and 1 inch thick. The lower side is flat and there are no perforations.

No. 21. There is said to be a lodge site on the Anthony Smith farm, lot 1, concession V. Its surface was obscured by sod at the time of my visit, but artifacts are said to have been numerous when it was first ploughed.

No. 22. There are several lodge sites on the bank of the small stream connecting Carter lake with the river Thames to the westward, on the farm of James B. McFarlane, lot 8, concession IV. Fragments of pottery were plentiful when the land was first ploughed. Here a clay pot was recently unearthed from a sand-bank and broken by two Indian boys of the neighbourhood. A fragment which I obtained from Mr. McFarlane showed the vessel to be of very inferior technique. Mr. McFarlane has also a piece of the rim decorated with round bosses made by punching from the inside of the vessel. Oblique incised lines along the edge below the rim complete the decoration of the top. Here points chipped from stone for arrows have been found.

No. 23. There are four lodge sites indicated by black spots near the river Thames on the farm of Charles Rapson, lot 9, concession IV.

No. 24. There are four lodge sites on the bank of a small stream on the farm of Charles Rapson, lot 10, concession IV. Here J. Hewitt has found chipped points of stone for arrows and other artifacts, while fragments of pottery are numerous.

No. 25. There is a site on the Scott farm, lot 10, concession IV, where none of the usual black spots indicating lodge sites were to be seen, but cultivation may develop them. Here J. Hewitt collected numerous points chipped from stone for

arrows, fragments of pottery, and a broken gorget. Charles Edwards of Innerkip found a broken "butterfly"¹ banner stone a little over 2½ inches long. There are two deep notches cut on one side of the specimen which were possibly made after it was broken to fasten on the missing part. Points chipped from stone for arrows, also celts and fragments of pottery are found west of here on the W. P. Clarke farm, lot 11, concession IV.

No. 26. There are several lodge sites near what is locally known as the "Indian Spring" immediately south of Mud lake, according to E. M. Hersee, but fifty years of cultivation have obliterated nearly all traces of them. Here chipped points of stone for arrows and celts have been found.

BURIAL PLACES.

Four undoubtedly prehistoric burial places have been found in this township. All of these were near the lodge sites, which would seem to indicate that they belong to the sites. No artifacts were found in them.

No. 1. One modern burial accompanied by artifacts was found about 1876. The skeleton, which is of a female, with dolichocephalic skull, was discovered by Mr. Dickson on his farm, now the Murray place, on the north half of lot 2, concession XIV. With the remains were found a birch-bark needle case, a rusty knife, a piece of amethyst, and a brass kettle with a hole in the bottom, possibly made accidentally during the excavation rather than purposely to break it and make it useless to a grave robber (as was commonly done with kettles put in graves in other parts of Ontario, fifteen such kettles being found in an ossuary in Medonte township, Simcoe county, according to information from A. F. Hunter of Barrie). The skull and kettle passed into the possession of a local clergyman who afterwards presented them to the late W. S. Wilkinson, of Woodstock, and they are now in the collection of his son, Dr. W. M. Wilkinson, of Denver, Colorado.

No. 2. Two skeletons were dug out of a sandbank on lot 2, concession IX, by William Forman, during 1903. Their depth

¹Cf. Fowke, Gerard, Stone Art, Fig. 145.

and orientation is unknown. Edwin Mitchell stated that the skeletons were about 8 feet apart and were flexed on the side. The nearly-formed wisdom teeth of one were not erupted. Dr. Dewar, of Bright, secured a fragment of a skull and Mr. Mitchell some other bones.

No. 3. On "Poverty Hill," on the lower half of lot 2, concession V, about 105 feet north of the concession line, I found the parietal of a skull protruding from a little wind blown hollow in the sand. About 10 feet of sand has been blown from above the skeleton, but most of this may have drifted over the original burial and, after the surface was disturbed by cultivation, again been blown away. William Mann, who lives about a fourth of a mile west of "Poverty Hill," says that when his father settled there he could not see the barn on Anthony Smith's farm to the east of the hill, although it was as high, or higher, than Mr. Mann's house; so the hill must have been at least 12 or more feet high in order to obscure the barn. The skeleton was found flexed and on its left side with head north and hands on the right cheek. Most of the ribs, some of the dorsal vertebræ, all the lumbar vertebræ, the pelvis, the upper ends of the femora, and the lower ends of the tibiæ were missing. The missing bones may have decayed, although the bones of the feet, which were on the same level, were intact. The tibiæ and the bones of the feet were only about 6 inches below the surface. Missing bones or other burials were not found although two of us dug here for several hours.

No. 4. On the hills to the south of this, in the next concession, there are a number of hollows possibly indicating graves. This burial ground is said to extend on to the old Murray farm, lot 3, concession IV, and on the farm of William Smith just east of the Murray place, lot 2, concession IV, a skeleton was unearthed from near the surface about 1896. Mr. Smith's employe found it. Further data were unobtainable.

No. 5. Several burials were found before 1876 on the old Hersee farm, lot 3, concession III, near the "Indian Spring."

SURFACE FINDS.

Artifacts are frequently found on the surface unassociated with lodge sites or burial places. Points chipped from stone for arrows, knives, and spears, are commonly found throughout the township, while celts or adzes are not rare.

On the old Risk farm, lot 8, concession XIII, a gorget or pendant about 5 inches long, with one perforation, was found. On one side there are two conventionalized drawings of the human form. It is in the collection of James Skillings, living near Innerkip. On lot 6, concession X, points chipped from stone for arrows, and a gorget with one perforation, but with a sharp cutting edge at one end, were found by C. R. McCormick. The latter has been mutilated by use as a whetstone, and mislaid.

On the farm of James Edwards, lot 5, concession VIII, points chipped from stone have been found, also half of a winged banner stone made of brownish striped slate. It is of a common type, resembling fig. 169 in Boyle's "Notes on Primitive Man in Ontario," and is now in the collection of J. Hewitt, of Innerkip.

On the John Mitchell farm, lot 3, concession VII, there have been found points chipped from stone for arrows, spears, and knives, and fragments of a single pottery vessel from the high bank of Hagey lake.

On the Chesney farm, lot 7, concession V, many points chipped from stone for arrows, knives, and drills, also celts, and a keel-shaped limestone pipe-head have been found by his son George. This pipe is 2 inches long by $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide across the broad side, and about 1 inch thick. A rude geometric pattern appears on one side of this much weathered pipe.

On the Downey farm, lot 6, concession V, Mr. Downey found a well chipped knife of chert. A slate gorget and a pendant with one perforation, in the George Chesney collection, were also picked up on this farm.

On the Robert Small farm, lot 7, concession IV, fragments of pottery and a stone tube made of striped slate have been found. The tube is somewhat barrel-shaped, wider at one end than at

the other, 2 inches long by about $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide, and $1\frac{1}{4}$ inches thick. It is in the collection of Charles Edwards, of Innerkip.

On the Biddis farm, lot 6, concession IV, a layer of stones, possibly a fire-place, is said to have been found while breaking new ground. Here chipped points of stone for arrows, and also other artifacts have been found.

On the north half of lot 4, concession IV, Amos Carter found a small limestone pipe similar to the one from the Chesney farm, a shallow mortar about a foot in diameter made of a roughly square piece of dark grey stone, and one or two pestles made of limestone. On the south half of this lot, on the Millar farm, many points chipped from stone for arrows, also the front half of an unfinished bird amulet and other artifacts have been found. This bird amulet is about $4\frac{1}{2}$ inches long by $2\frac{1}{2}$ inches high, and fully $1\frac{1}{2}$ inches wide at the bottom. Only the lower portion of the neck has been polished, the rest of the surface still showing peck marks. On each side of the head there are projecting bosses evidently in process of transformation into large projecting eyes. It is in the Edwards collection at Innerkip.

On the William Mann farm, lot 3, concession IV, a gorget was found and recently many points chipped from stone for arrows and spears have been secured.

On George Tottle's farm, lot 1, concession IV, Mr. Tottle found a copper arrowhead, but as he has moved away, the specimen is not available.

On the north half of lot 1, concession IV, a long, roller-like pestle, celts, and points chipped from stone for arrows have been found by Robert Lockhart. The pestle is in the Burgess collection at Drumbo.

On the farm of Alexander Graham, lot 13, concession III, points chipped from stone for arrows, also celts, gorgets, and other artifacts have been found.

On lot 7, concession III, R. J. Baker found points chipped from stone for arrows, also celts and a small hatchet-shaped banner stone about 4 inches long, which is now in a private collection in Detroit.

Trails.

From the River Nith in Blenheim township, the next township to the east, a trail extended to the banks of Horner creek in this township and passed through the country about midway between the two concessions.¹ The course indicated on the accompanying map is presumably correct.

A trail, indicated approximately on the map, ran along the high hills, from the "Indian Spring" in lot 3, concession III, in a southwesterly direction, according to E. M. Hersee. Perhaps it connected with the Indian trail followed by the old stage road in East Oxford township to the south.

CONCLUSION.

The surface survey of this township, less than 13 miles long and barely 9 miles wide, an area much smaller than 100 square miles, resulted in the location in less than nine field-working days, counting earlier work as well as that for the Geological Survey, of twenty-six lodge and village sites, five burial places, and many surface finds. This makes a discovery of more than three sites per day. As there is no reason to consider this township exceptionally favourable for prehistoric occupation, it being in the midst of Ontario and not bordering a great lake or having a very large river, we may conclude that the other townships in the area common to southern Ontario, the cleared forest area, the St. Lawrence lowlands and the Iroquoian linguistic area, would average as productive. We may expect some to be more barren, but others, those located on lakes or including special features as quarries or rich corn land, to far surpass it. It thus seems that there is ample material in this area for archaeological work.

The lodge sites are located on high land, ridges, or the edges of benches, but always near a spring or a stream. This indicates where we may expect to find sites in other parts of this area. Similar sites occur in Simcoe county² according to Hunter,

¹Wintemberg, W. J., "Archaeology of Blenheim Township". (The Ontario Archaeological Report for 1902, p. 69.)

²Hunter, A. F., "Huron Village Sites in Flots and Vespra townships, Simcoe county," Toronto, 1907, pp. 25, 34, 49.

and in the Niagara peninsula according to information from George Oliver of Jordan Station, Ontario. The lodge sites are circular, while some Neutral sites are oblong. The surface appearance of the sites resembles that of the Neutral sites of Blenheim township, but the finds and the location of the finds are different. They contain little or no ash, while Neutral sites are often largely made up of ash layers.

Much of the pottery being similar to the Potomac-Chesapeake ware, seems to be of a type made by tribes of the Algonquian linguistic stock. These pre-Neutral sites, therefore, may have been of Algonquian occupation. All the sites found are pre-historic and pre-Neutral, the earliest period known in this general region, whereas in Blenheim township evidences were found of three distinct aboriginal periods—the pre-Neutral, the Neutral, and the European. They probably antedate not only Neutral but all Iroquoian sites in this part of the country and perhaps even in the whole of the Hurontario peninsula and parts of New York.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MAP
BLANDFORD TOWNSHIP
OXFORD COUNTY
ONTARIO
BY
W. J. WINTERBERG
1911
Scale of miles
1 0 1

LEGEND

- Lodge site
- ▨ Lodge sites
- Grave or single burial
- Cemetery
- △ Surface finds
- ▲ Ceremonial implements found on surface
- Pipe
- Pottery vessel
- Fragments of pottery
- Copper implement
- ◆ Cache
- Trail or portage

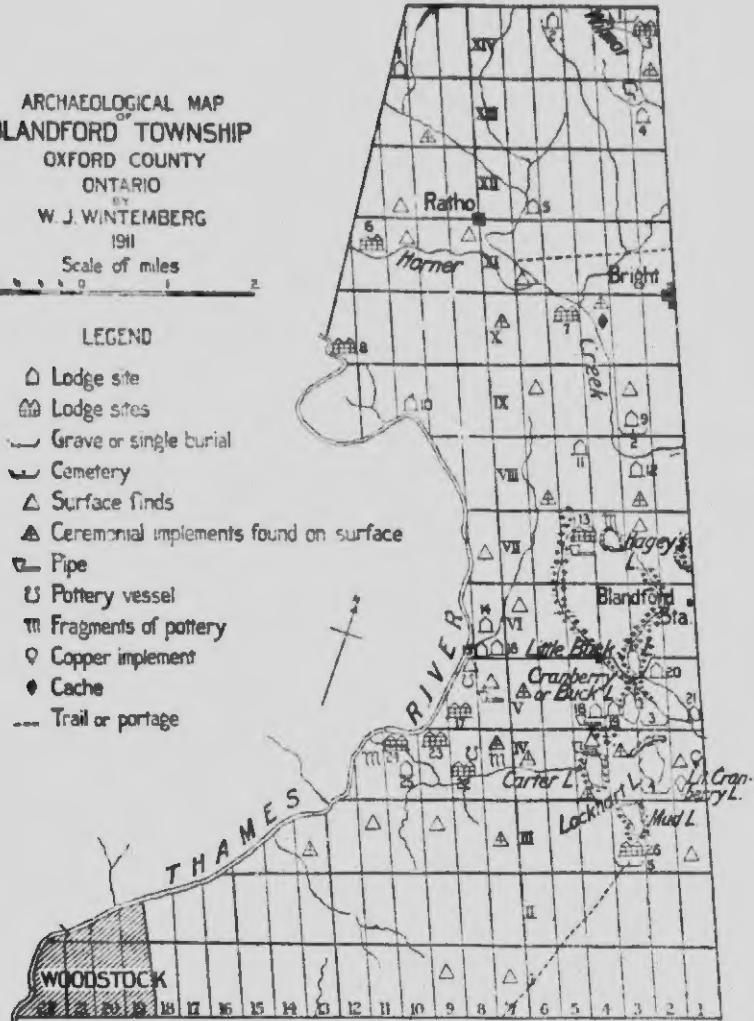


Fig. 5.

